



# The Totem Poll

Harford County's Election Poll Workers Newsletter

Building a better election process one election judge at a time

Volume 5 Issue 1

Summer, 2011

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## Special points of interest:

### 2012 Presidential Election Dates:

**Primary Election:** April 3rd

**General Election:** November 6th

**Early Voting Dates:** March 24-29th  
October 27-November 1st

## Director's Letter:

Dear Election Judges,

September is here, and then, before you know it, it will be Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. As 2012 begins, our office will be in high gear in making plans for the April 3rd Presidential Primary Election. In fact, you have probably seen the media following presidential candidates already.

Maryland has moved back our Presidential Primary from February to April 3, 2012. Hopefully, we will be out of our winter weather that produced an icy mix in 2008.

The 2012 Presidential Election will also be impacted by redistricting. Harford County, which is currently in three congressional districts, three legislative districts, and six councilmanic districts, may be changed by redistricting.

Again, in 2012 we will have Early Voting. Because of the limited parking at the Bel

Air Library, we are moving Early Voting to the McFaul Activity Center in Bel Air. This facility provides more space and more parking and is centrally located in Harford County right off of Rt. 24 next to MVA. We believe this location will be more convenient for Harford Co. voters.

I hope that you are willing to serve as an Election Judge in 2012, which should be a very exciting election. Voters will be electing a President and members of the House of Representatives. At least one statewide question will be included on the ballot. Although we anticipate a smaller turnout in the Primary Election, the General Election is usually our largest turnout.

As election judge training sessions are scheduled, I hope that you will agree to serve your community as an Election Judge to ensure that our elections are conducted fairly and accurately.

Sincerely,

Jim Massey

## Congrats to Dale and Kim!!

Harford County Board of Elections would like to congratulate Deputy Director Dale Livingston and Election Supervisor Kim Atkins for being designated as Certified Elections/Registration Administrators (CERA) by the Election Center this year.

Graduating from CERA is the highest professional achievement, in ceremonies, conducted by the Election Center.

CERA designation is achieved only

through a multi-year course of study conducted by the Election Center's Professional Education Program and completion of twelve core courses taught by the Master's in Public Administration faculty of Auburn University (Auburn, Alabama). These courses rang from ethics, to voter registration and elections law, planning, communications and voter participation, among others. The intent of the program is to professionalize the management of voter registration and elections administration in promoting and preserving public trust in the democratic process.

The Election Center is a nonprofit organization also known as the National Association of Election Officials.. Its members are government employees whose profession is to serve in voter registration and elections administration. With more than 1,000 members nationwide, The Election Center has the largest number of the state and local election and voter registration administrators as members of any elections related organization in America.

Congratulations Dale and Kim! You make us proud!



If there was ever an individual in this office every Election Judge should know by name or by face, it's Bob Ichniowski. After five exceptional years as an Election Judge Coordinator, Mr. Ichniowski has decided to move on. No words can express how much he will be missed; however, we do congratulate and thank Bob for all his hard work and dedication; as well as his positive and uplifting presence he provided this office on a daily basis. Enjoy your retirement Bob, and don't forget to drop us a line!



## Brite Idea!!

Harford County Board of Elections is excited to present a new and more efficient and effective way to schedule, organize and sign up for judges classes. Eventbrite is a fairly new software designed to make scheduling events easier. Judges can now sign up for classes online.

The dates for the classes are already scheduled; with Eventbrite, all you have to do is go to our website and click on our Eventbrite link. You will then see a link pertaining to each judges class (Chief, Check-In etc.). When you click on your link, you will then be asked to enter a password (which will be provided to

you in advance). After you enter your password, you will be brought to a calendar displaying the dates and times of each training course. You will find the date and time of the class that best fits your schedule, and sign up. There will be limits as to how many can attend one course, and you will be able to see on the calendar how many seats are left in the class or if the course is completely filled.

Once you schedule your course, you then will be asked to print your bar-coded ticket that you must have with you when you come to class. No more signing your name, when

you come to class, your ticket will be scanned and your attendance will be recorded.

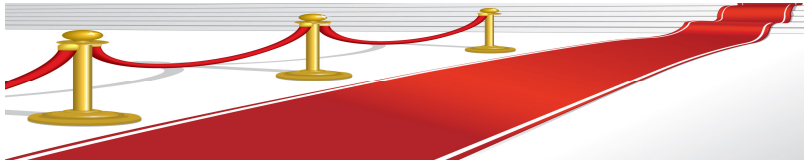
For those of you who don't have access to the internet, you may still call the office to schedule a training class and we will enter you into the system.

More information, including a step-by-step instructions guide will be provided to you in the coming weeks so judges can begin scheduling as soon as possible. If you have any questions, you may call the office Monday-Friday from 8am to 5pm at (410) 638-3565.



## Welcome Anna!!

Let's all give a warm welcome to Mrs. Anna Schammel! Anna will be taking over the duties of Election Judge Coordinator left by now retired Bob Ichniowski. Anna has been an employee here at the Election office for three and a half years working in the Absentee Department. She will now be splitting her duties doing both.



## Let's Get Pumped!!!

Starting in 2012, precinct 3-13, formally Bel Forest Christian Academy, will have a new place to call home. The newly constructed Red Pump Elementary School, which opens in August, will now be the new precinct location.

Located at 600 Red Pump Road in Bel Air, Red Pump Elementary will provide easier parking as well as more space within the building so judges and voters will no longer feel so confined as they did at Bel Forest. Furthermore, Red Pump is more conducive to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.).



**Red Pump Elementary School, the new location for precinct 3-13**

## Graduating From Middle to Elementary School

District 3-13 isn't the only polling place on the move; to make accessibility easier for voters, Harford County Board of Elections has decided to move District Precinct 1-1 from Magnolia Middle School to Magnolia Elementary School. The move is designed to make access easier for voters with the school located at the corner of Trimble Rd in Joppa in front of the Middle School.



**Magnolia Elementary School located at 901 Trimble Rd in Joppa.**

## Harford has a New Early Voting Site for 2012!



The William N. McFaul Activity Center is located at 525 W. MacPhail Rd in Bel Air

### Then there was one

The McFaul Activity Center, Harford's new Early Voting site is a unique facility that features programs sponsored by Harford County's Office on Aging, Parks and Recreation, and Boys and Girls Club of Harford County.

Programs include arts & crafts, volleyball, aerobics, billiards, board and card games, after school activities, basketball, yoga, computer training, exercise room, etc.

Some of its features include a lounge with a gas fireplace and large flat screen TV, two arts and crafts rooms, a com-

puter center with 8 web-enabled computers, a billiards room with two pool tables and a shuffleboard table and a fitness center with treadmills, weights and other exercise equipment.

The location of the polling place for the activity center will be in the gymnasium,

which is large enough to be divided into two rooms. The picture above is where entrance will be.

Office hours for the parks and recreational services are from 8:30am to 4:30pm. The number to the center is 410-638-3528.

See you in March!



### The Pollcat

by: Dale Livingston





## More Polling Place Changes...

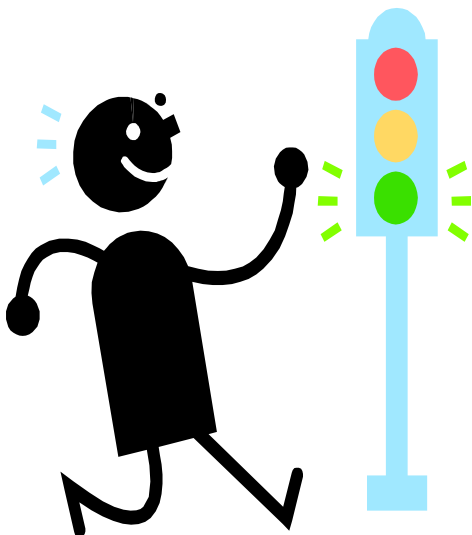
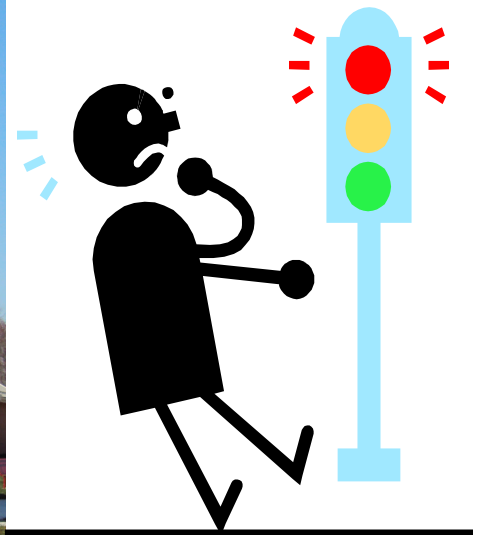
- 1-13 St. Francis is temporarily moving to Knights of Columbus
- 1-05 is moving back to Deerfield Elementary
- 1-19 is moving back to Edgewood H.S.
- 3-17 is going from Homestead Elementary to Wakefield Elementary
- 3-02 is going from Churchville Elementary School to Churchville Recreation Center
- 3-14 is going from Bel Air United Methodist to Bel Air High School
- 3-15 is going from Bel Air High School to Harford Day School



**Dist/Prec 1-19; Edgewood H. S. located at 2415 Willoughby Beach Rd. In 2010, this precinct was at Edgewood Middle while the new building was under construction.**



**District/Precinct 1-05; the new Deerfield Elementary School located at 2307 Willoughby Beach Rd in Edgewood. In 2010, 1-05 was combined with 1-19 at Edgewood Middle while the middle school was being built.**



**District/Precinct 3-02; Churchville Recreation Center located at 111 Glenville Rd.**

## Kristin Carven...the Global Judge

For Kristin Carven, to say she has experience working as an Election Judge would be the Mt. Everest of understatement. She officially became a Chief Judge for the first time in 2010 at St. Matthew's Church for the Gubernatorial Elections. Before that, she was at Bel Forest Christian Academy as a Check-In Judge for the 2008 Presidential Election. However, 11 years earlier Kristin Carven took on a much more challenging Election position, one that would take her halfway around the world and back again.

In 1997, while many of us were here in the U.S. indulging in the comfort of democracy, Kristin was in Bosnia-Herzegovina doing her part to help establish the very same form of government. But it didn't end there for her, in 2002 she made stops in the Ukraine and Macedonia; gradually experiencing multiple chains of responsibility along the way. From Logistics Officer, to Election Supervisor, to Short-Term Election Observer, Kristin Carven is one of the few people in Harford County who can honestly say there is no Election position she can't handle.

Her story begins in 1997, while working as an Intern Coordinator for the U.S. Department of State, her job at the time was to place students on assignment in U.S. embassies and consulates in countries around the world. It was during that time the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was looking for people to observe elections. It was then where they asked Kristin if she was interested in working as a Logistics Officer in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country was in the midst of reform. It had been recovering from a three and a half year war from 1992-95 which left the county in peril. "I saw it as a good opportunity to help people build democracy," she said. She immediately took on the challenge.

For three and a half months Kristin performed her duties as a Logistics Officer. Her job was to arrange transpor-

tation, housing, interpreters and drivers for 100 international short term observers from countries around the world. She would have to check cars to make sure they were drivable; she checked homes to make sure they were livable, and interviewed the people to make sure they were capable. She would start by going to a particular town and announcing through the "media" that she would be arriving in their area to interview potential interpreters who were looking for jobs. "Media" in a war torn country consists of an individual or two well engaged in the social network of the community who spreads the information through the community verbally. Kristin would also announce when and where the interviews would take place; akin to if an interviewer was announcing they were coming to Harford and would make various trips to Aberdeen one day, then Edgewood, Bel Air, Fallston, etc.

When it was time for her to conduct interviews, Kristin was astounded to find such a huge turnout waiting for her. "Cars would be lined up [all] down the road," she said. It was her job to check each car to make sure they were in working order by checking the suspension, windshield wipers, turn signals and making sure the driver was cognoscente enough to be safe. Though she didn't know much about cars, being a seasoned motorist was not a requisite for Logistics Officer. On average, she would inspect 25-30 cars during a 5 hour period while only accepting 10 (there would be two interpreters per car). Still recovering from the war, the cars selected wouldn't exactly make the Forbes top ten lists, but they were good enough to get around.

While Kristin spent half of her day inspecting cars, the other half was spent interviewing potential interpreters. She would test their ability to understand languages and dialects; how well they can translate and how to deal with difficult situations such as an unruly client. After her interviews, which would consist of around 40 people, she would line



them up and rank them from best to worst. Out of the 40, only 20 to 25 people would get the job.

"Housing was its own day," said Kristin, considering there were 100 Election Observers who needed a place to stay. Because of the war, many hotels in Bosnia were damaged beyond immediate repair; there was no plumbing, no windows, no heat, the rooms were flooded; there was no security whatsoever. The only alternative was to pay the local residents to use their homes. Again, it was Kristin's job to visit each home for those who volunteered to see if the house had your basic common needs; shelter, food, mattress, heat, running water, etc. That was no easy task either. "[Some] homes were flooded," says Kristin, "I felt bad for the people [and homes] I didn't pick because they desperately needed the money...and many were hoping their home would be picked so they could get [that] money and help refurbish the economy."

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, three rival ethnic groups dominated the region, Muslims, Serbs and Croats. In some cases, a house belonging to one ethnic group would be chased out of their homes by a rival. That group would then pose as the home owners. If that home was chosen, they would be paid. It was unclear to Kristin whether the original homeowner ever got their house back. *(Continued on Next Page)*



## Global Judge cont'd

From February to May Kristin went from town to town, house to house, car to car and person to person looking for top notch suitors. Once found, she would assign each person, car and home to an Election Observer.

Short term Election Observers came from 46 countries around the world. During their two week stint in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the observers were trained, given assignments and accommodations before going to their assigned home.

When it came time for the Municipal Election Day in May, the drivers would escort the observers along with the two interpreters to their assigned precincts. It was the observer's job to go to each polling site writing reports for each polling station, making sure things are in order. When the polls were closed, the observers would make sure the ballots were returned safely to the Election office without being tampered with. In a span of a couple of days, they would have a quick debriefing with the OSCE before being deployed back home. For Kristin, the majority of her work was done in the months prior to Election Day. That would be the last time she worked as a Logistics Officer, but for her, it was her most enjoyable. Just watching the people rejoice in euphoria upon telling them they were accepted was an intense thrill of excitement for Kristin. "[It felt good] knowing that they would have money to feed their families," she said. When it was over, the Election was certified, the observers went home, and Kristin was exhausted.

In October of 1999, a re-energized Kristin was back at it again in Bosnia-Herzegovina, only this time working as an Election Supervisor for their General Election. She even persuaded her then fiancé Sean Carver (now husband) to join her. During that time media stories of violence in the area spurred fear and concern. Because Kristin now had experience in the country, and

knowing her fiancé was flying out the day before, she took precautionary measures. She attained two 30lbs flack vests, one for her and one for him. He wore his without incident. As for Kristin, she simply left hers behind, adding a few extra shoes and outfits to the suitcase instead. She knew what to do and what not to do; it was more for peace of mind for Sean.

For this Election, Kristin was assigned a single polling place for the entire day. Having her own table off to the side, "It was my job to observe the counting of the votes, verify the rules and regulations were followed and make sure forms were completed properly," she said. "The local Election workers would sometimes come to me for suggested resolutions." She had all the duties of a Chief Judge, only she had to be hands off.

Other than the actual voting equipment, polling places in Bosnia-Herzegovina are not much different from ours. They have Chief Judges, Check-In Judges and Unit Judges. Instead of receiving an "I Voted" sticker after voters cast their ballot, they simply would get their finger painted with purple inedible ink, a security measure to prevent double voting. A purple finger indicated an energizing sense of pride for Bosnians.

Throughout the day, it was to Kristin's pleasant surprise the number of citizens coming out to vote. "I saw 150 people at one point, lined up out the building and down the road," she says, "they didn't [even] drive cars."

After a two year hiatus, Kristin was eager to get back into the grind of overseas elections. She called the OSCE and asked to be put on the list. It didn't matter to her where she would be assigned; whether it be Bosnia, Croatia, Pakistan, the thrill alone of traveling across the world was rewarding enough in its own right. This time, her journey would take her to the Ukraine for their Parliamentary Election. In April of 2002, it was her turn to work as a Short-Term Election Observer. This time she would be assigned an entire region. "I would go



**A Muslim woman holding up her purple painted finger in the form of a peace sign in pride.**

throughout that region to observe different polling stations and write a report for each [one]," said Kristin. Think of her duties similar to that of an Election Day Support Specialist (EDSS) that Harford uses. Just like the Election Observers she helped accommodate in '97, she was given a driver and interpreter to assist her.

In September of that same year she was sent to Macedonia, again as a Short Term Election Observer for their Parliamentary Election. Her comfort level at this point was at an all time high. Her experience made this Election a cake walk. This, however, would be her last hurrah as an overseas Election Official. Not long after leaving Macedonia, Kristin had a daughter, who is now seven.

Kristin is busy these days working for Aberdeen Proving Ground as a Program Specialist for the Army Evaluation Center. Her time overseas was an experience she doesn't regret. Each Election she worked began and ended without incident. Though the job didn't pay, and the only money she did receive was a per diem check given to cover living and traveling expenses, she would gladly do it again if given the opportunity. "I was glad to be apart of the democratic process," she says, "It's enlightening to see how Elections work in other countries."

*If you are interested in working for the OSCE as an observer, go to:*

<http://www.osce.org/odihr-elections>



**Dist/Precinct 3-15; Harford Day School located at 715 Moores Mill Rd in Bel Air. The previous location for 3-15 was Bel Air High School.**



**Dist/Precinct 1-13; The Knights of Columbus Lodge at St. Francis De Sales located at 1450 Abingdon Rd, Abingdon MD.**

**Contributing Editors:**

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Jim Massey

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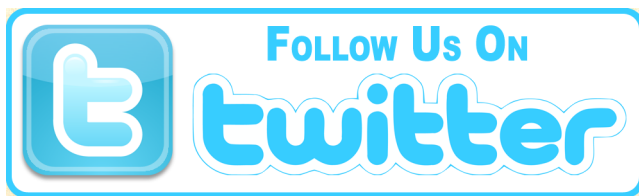
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